

Minutes of DAAC Meeting

Call to Order

Co-Chair Seren Derin called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Attendance

DAAC members present were: Seren Derin, Dana Goddard, Jim MacRostie, Joan Rising and Joe Tringali

Others present were: Jason Skeels, Town Engineer; Larry Shaffer, Town Manager; Jane Gamache, public, and Carolyn Holstein, DAAC staff liaison

Minutes

Minutes from the June and July meetings were available for discussion and approval. There were no comment or corrections made to either set of minutes.

Ms. Derin made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Mr. Tringali seconded the motion, and the vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as written.

Membership

Ms. Derin announced that Madeline Peters resigned from the DAAC. The committee discussed possible replacements. It was felt that disabilities other than mobility ones should be represented on the committee.

Precinct 8 Polling Place

As had been discussed at several meetings, parking for the Munson Library does not meet ADA requirements for accessibility. There a curb cut in front of the building along South East Street, but the exit from a van with lift ends up in the bushes from this space. Also, there is no curbcut from South Congregation Church to the library. The committee suggested a number of solutions to the problem which will be discussed with the DPW Superintendent or the Town Manager.

- Close part of the street in front of the library so that folks in wheel chairs can navigate more safely on the street;
- Section off part of the parking lot on the common for accessible parking, pave it;
- Allow voters with mobility issues to vote at other polling places in Town (all other precincts are fully accessible);
- Change the curb cut in front of the South Congregational Church.

Mr. Skeels said that the Congregational Church is talking with the town about drainage, parking and curb cut issues. It is expected that these issues will be addressed this year.

Note: Proper curb cuts and access were completed by the Town and church subsequent to the DAAC meeting.

List of Access Problems (from agenda)

The DAAC asked Jason Skeels, Town Engineer, about a couple of items on the “problem” list.

1. Mr. MacRostie said that the curb cuts on the new North Pleasant Street sidewalk near UMass are too steep on the east side of the street, and the sidewalk on the south side near Gordon Hall is very rough. Mr. Skeels said that he was aware of the problem about the curb cuts and has told the construction folks to re-do the curb cuts. The sidewalk in front of Gordon Hall is on the list for repairs as well.

2. The discharge area for van HP space behind Monkey Bar at the Boltwood Garage is not wide enough by several feet. Mr. Skeels agreed that removing part of the corner sidewalk which is quite wide, and pushing the curb back is possible to do.
3. Installing a "No turn on Red" restriction at the Route 9/ South Pleasant Street intersection, particularly at the north-east corner where visibility is poor. Mr. Skeels had no comment about that problem.

Amethyst Brook Crosswalk

Town Engineer Skeels first addressed the crosswalk issue. He said that the Public Works Committee endorsed the idea of a crosswalk from the Amethyst Brook Conservation parking area to Ward Street, but that the DPW staff did not. There is no curb cut for the sidewalk on the south side of Pelham Road and no sidewalk on the Amethyst Brook side. The sidewalk on the south side is not in good repair, is narrow and is not safe. Vehicles speed at 40+ miles/hour, and visibility is poor during commute times. In Mr. Skeels opinion, the crosswalk would give an appearance of safety, but may be creating a nuisance in reality.

At that point, Town Manager Larry Shaffer arrived at the meeting. He said that the neighbors along Ward Street want the crosswalk, and it is going to happen. The committee then began to work on recommendations to make the crosswalk as safe as possible.

1. Move the crosswalk to the east side of Ward Street, where a curb cut is possible;
2. Remove the bushes/weeds on the Amethyst side (north) side of the crosswalk and install a crushed gravel path for pedestrians;
3. Install at least one van HP space in the Amethyst parking area;
4. Organize the parking area to make it less haphazard;
5. Install signage along Pelham Road saying "Slow – Crosswalk" or something similar.

The Committee noted that #3 & #4 above should be done by the Conservation Department, since that parking area is under their jurisdiction.

After further discussions, the following motion made by Joe Tringali was passed (4 in favor and 1 abstained).

"The DAAC approves the crosswalk on the conditions that it be relocated to the easterly side of Ward Street and an accessible pathway be created across the grass walkway; also a van accessible parking spot will be added to the parking area."

The Town Manager will bring this motion to the Select Board with the stated conditions.

Private/Public Parking Spaces

The Pioneer Valley Planning Commission updated the parking study. They recommended private owners collaborate with the town.

The Town Manager sent a letter to Bank of America about their private parking space and made a proposal that will allow their employees to park in CVS lot in exchange for converting their private parking into public parking lot with several HP places.

The Jones Library HP place does not have enough space for a van lift to be lowered. This lot is owned by the library and they control the parking. It was decided that Bonnie Isman will be invited to a DAAC meeting to discuss the problems.

Visitability

The DAAC discussed with the Town Manager the issue of “visitability”. Mr. Shaffer suggested that the Building Commissioner Bonnie Weeks attend a DAAC meeting to see if visitability could be part of new construction requirements.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Seren Derin, Chair and Carolyn Holstein, staff liaison

Next Meeting – October 21, 2008, 3 pm, Room 101, Bangs Center